

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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Working Paper

Nuclear Disarmament: Substantive Discussion in the Conference on Disarmament

The purpose of this working paper is to set out considerations relevant to the substantive discussion of nuclear disarmament issues which Canada has long advocated should take place in the CD.

Context:

Canada's policy objective is to secure the elimination of nuclear weapons. We have accepted that this objective must be achieved through a series of measures over time given the political, strategic security and technical complexity of the issue. At the same time this is not an open-ended process and the five Nuclear-Weapon States, which have primary responsibility in this context, are committed to "the determined pursuit of systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally, with the ultimate goal of eliminating those weapons ...". The recognition by Canada of the primary responsibility of the five Nuclear-Weapon States is accompanied by a strong assertion of the political and security interest of Canada in nuclear disarmament as well as of its legal undertaking under Article VI of the NPT to be a responsible contributor to and participant in that process. This is matched by an equally strong commitment to nuclear non-proliferation, that is, the prevention wherever possible and the roll-back wherever necessary of the spread of nuclear weapons to states other than the five Nuclear-Weapon States.

A corollary of the above is the assertion by Canada that the CD has a contribution to make in the field of nuclear disarmament, with that contribution falling into two categories:

- (a) the negotiation of appropriate multilateral instruments (e.g. CTBT, FMCT) as appropriate and agreed; and,
- (b) the substantive discussion of nuclear disarmament issues through which the international community can be better informed on a continuing basis, can express its views as to the process, and can identify issues which might be subject to multilateral negotiations.

Each of these are significant and mutually reinforcing. The substantive discussion of any issue under (b) in no way implies agreement to negotiate that issue under (a). Specifically, for example, substantive discussion of the nuclear weapons reduction process through START would not in any manner predispose or lead to the assumption that the CD would ever negotiate such reductions; such negotiations remain the prerogative of the Nuclear-Weapon States.

Issues:

Various suggestions have been made concerning issues or "programmes of issues" which should be discussed in the CD. Set out below in a sequential thematic manner are issue areas which, inter alia, Canada suggests could be subjects of discussion:

- 1) Rationales for Possession/Numbers of Nuclear Weapons
- 2) Theories of Deterrence
- 3) Strategic and Tactical Weapons: Distinctions and Doctrines
- 4) START Process: Stages and Elements
- 5) Transparency of Strategic/Tactical Inventories
- 6) Measures to Promote Irreversibility
- 7) Viability of the ABM Treaty
- 8) Unilateral Efforts
- 9) Related Steps
 - a) Information on Missile Launchings/Early Warning
 - b) Material Management and Disposition
 - c) Operational Measures:
 - e.g. - Demating
 - e.g. - Dealerting

These are only a number of categories on which substantive discussion would take place. Several (e.g. No. 4 on the START Process) may have a wide range of clarifications considered desirable.

Relevant also is the question of what the CD should not or would not do. As Canada has frequently stated over the past year this should also be the subject of prior discussion and agreement.

Mechanism/Mandate

This is of "extremely high priority" (CD/1500) for Canada. We consider that ongoing substantive discussions of nuclear disarmament issues should take place in the CD, preferably with the clear objective of identifying specific issues appropriate for multilateral negotiations in the CD at some time. At this time two options for action by the CD exist:

Option A: establishment of a standing mechanism (the title is not critical) for the substantive ongoing discussion of nuclear disarmament issues per the Canada proposal (CD/1568) or the Belgium et al proposal (CD/1565) as amended (i.e. with the deletion in line 2 of the wording "study ways and means of" so to read "to establish an exchange");

Option B: (if agreement is not possible on Option A): continuing intensive consultations by the Presidency using an "enhanced troika" process building upon the agreement reached in 1998 as reflected in paragraph 3 of CD/1566 tabled by the former President of the CD on 02 February 1999; in this context the mandate of this enhanced troika process could be the proposal by Belgium et al without amendment. Other additional elements for an enhanced troika might include: regular meetings (i.e. every two weeks); focusing on written proposals; regular reporting to the Plenary.
